

Public's help sought in designing Korean War Memorial

It has been a passion project for local historians and veterans, and now the public's help is being sought to make the dream a reality.

The Town of Aurora, in conjunction with the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, is looking for the public's feedback on a memorial to the Korean War, one which will be placed at the Aurora Peace Park alongside the Cenotaph honouring the residents of Aurora, King, and Whitchurch who fell in the First World War, the Altar of Sacrifice commemorating local men who lost their lives in the Second World War, and the decommissioned LAV placed there to remember the men and women who served in Afghanistan.

'We are asking the public to submit their design ideas for a fitting monument to honour the soldiers from Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville who fought in the Korean War,' said the Town of Aurora in a statement. 'The winning design will be submitted as part of a grant application to Veterans Affairs Canada's Commemorative Partnership Program for Community War Memorial funding to cover some of the costs.'

'Amateur artists are welcome to submit. This design call-out is open to any resident of Aurora, King or Whitchurch-Stouffville. We are looking for concept drawings that can be as simple as a pencil sketch to provide the inspiration and general idea for a suitable memorial rather than formal design drawings and specifications. The memorial should not contain any names of soldiers who fought in the war and must be in both English and French.'

The top three memorial designs submitted by the deadline of May 28 will be placed on the Town's online communications platform, Engage Aurora, for public input and voting on the preferred design. The designer behind the winning submission will be invited to unveil the monument once it is completed and receive a gift card of \$250.

'Remembrances of Canada's contribution to the Korean War effort can be found in many municipalities across this country,' said the Town. 'Aurora's War Memorial Peace Park solemnly pays tribute to those who served and were lost in the two World Wars and the Afghan war. There is, however, no similar recognition of the Korean War.'

A Korean War memorial was first pitched to Aurora Council this past winter by local historian Bill Newman, who was inspired to pursue the project after a visit to Seoul in 2016.

While there, he toured the demilitarized zone (DMZ) and took in memorials recognizing the conflict, including a memorial to Canada's contributions at the Korean War Memorial and Museum. When he came back home, he realized there wasn't that same recognition in his hometown and began his research with an assist from the Aurora Museum & Archives.

Today, memorials to Canada's contributions to the Korean War can be found at monuments from coast to coast, but Aurora is one of the exceptions. Although no Aurorans are known to have lost their lives in the conflict, Mr. Newman says it is 'timely and fitting' to recognize what they did to fend off 'yet another threat to the freedom and right of self-determination of the world's peoples.'

'We are requesting through this presentation the involvement of the Town and its staff to design and locate a fitting memorial at the Peace Park to our Korean War veterans,' he said. 'We understand the funding for the memorial may be obtainable through Veterans Affairs Canada's commemorative partnership program for a community war memorial funding. Your favourable consideration of this request would provide overdue recognition to those from our community and surrounding area who served in what is being termed as 'Canada's forgotten war.'

'When one of the Legion members heard about this proposal to Council, he remarked with almost a tear in his eye, 'This is for you, dad.' May we always remember them.'

For more information on the project, visit engageaurora.ca/koreanwarmemorial.

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